



Ten Tips to Help Your Baby Sleep Better



1 Establish a regular sleep time

During the first weeks of life your baby does not yet have a set day-night rhythm. You can help create this rhythm by setting regular times for going to bed and waking up. These need to allow plenty of time for sleep. The more regular the hours, the stronger the sleep-wake cycle will be. This helps you predict when they need sleep. Regular hours are important for older children too.

2 Night time is for sleep

You need to help your baby understand this. You do this by socialising as little as you can at night. Save stimulating social interaction for daylight and evening hours. Attend to your baby and feed in low light overnight. Also avoid rushing to the cot at the first sign of stirring. Your baby may well resettle if left for a moment or two.

3 A bedtime routine

Get into the habit of doing the same things before bed. This helps prepare your baby for sleep. It also helps him or her understand that the time has come for sleep. Simple things like a bath, some quiet time including reading to your baby, a final feed and a kiss can be part of this routine.

4 Get your child used to being put into bed awake

This helps your baby learn to fall to sleep without your help. It's best for your baby to be sleepy and relaxed when they are placed in the cot. You don't need to wait for your child to be asleep before putting him or her to bed.

5 Daytime naps

Babies and young children need a lot of sleep. They will need daytime naps. Get into a routine with these as much as you can.

6 Keep it simple

Don't go over the top to get your baby to sleep. Rocking, pushing your baby around in a stroller and other things may help at first. But the risk is that your baby will learn to need these things to sleep. If this happens, they won't go to sleep without them. From the start, take steps to help your baby learn to sleep alone. Don't rely on external aids.

7 Be consistent

Your baby will learn good sleep habits if you take a consistent approach. You may find it quite tough at first, but there will be long term rewards for you and your baby.

8 The family bed

Think about whether you really want your baby to sleep in your bed. While some parents prefer this sooner or later the infant will need to move out. You might then find that it is hard to break the habit. Babies sleeping in the parents' bed has also been linked to a higher risk of sudden infant death syndrome in some cases. If you do choose to have your baby sleep in bed with you, make sure you position your baby with care. You don't want them covered by bedclothes or too hot. Also think about where you and your partner sleep so that you don't roll onto your baby by accident.

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The peak national association of clinicians and scientists devoted to investigation of sleep and its disorders

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